

PITFALLS OF DIY DIVORCE

MITCHELL & CRUNK ATTORNEYS AT LAW

[Visit Our Website](#)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pitfalls of DIY Introduction

Chapter 1: Reasons You Should Not DIY Your Own Divorce 2-4

Missing Out on Expert Advice
Increased Stress
Potential Mistakes
May Not Have a Clear and Binding Agreement
May Experience Delays
Could Bring Emotions Into It
Potential to Be Bullied
Could End Up Costing You More
Missing Out on a Lawyer's Efficiency
No Mediator Between You and Your Spouse
No Shoulder to Lean On

Chapter 2: Missing Out on Expert Advice 5-7

Properly Filing Your Petition for Divorce
Property Distribution
Child Custody and Support Issues

Chapter 3: Increased Stressed 8-9

The Harms of Stress
How a Georgia Divorce Lawyer Can Help

Chapter 4: Could Make Mistakes 10-13

Filing the Petition for Divorce
Dealing with Property Distribution
Seeking Alimony/Spousal Support in Georgia
Child Custody Errors

Chapter 5: May Not Have a Clear and Binding Agreement 14-15

Required Papers and the Marital Settlement Agreement
Unenforceable Terms Commonly Put in Divorce Papers
Dangers of Verbal Agreements with Your Spouse

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONT)

Chapter 6: May Experience Delays 16-17

Meeting Filing Timelines and Requirements
When the Other Spouse Does Not Want to Get Divorced
Other Spouse Will Not Agree to Terms

Chapter 7: Could Bring Emotions Into It 18-19

Focusing on the “Big Picture” of Your Divorce
Interactions with the Other Spouse and the Day-to-Day Stressors of Divorce

Chapter 8: Potential to be Bullied 20-21

Bullying During Divorce
Why You Need a Lawyer
The Importance of a Lawyer if You Are Being Bullied

Chapter 9: Could End Up Costing You More 22-23

Costs of Divorce
Issues With a DIY Divorce
An Attorney is a Valuable Asset in the Divorce Process in Georgia

Chapter 10: Missing Out on a Lawyer’s Efficiency 24-25

Why Lawyers Are Efficient
The Importance of a Family Law Attorney

Chapter 11: No Mediator Between You and Your Spouse 26-27

How a Lawyer Can Help With Mediation
Why You Shouldn’t File Your Own Divorce

Chapter 12: No Shoulder to Lean On 28-29

How a Lawyer Can Provide a Shoulder to Lean On

Chapter 13: Answer: Contact a Divorce Lawyer 30

Mitchell & Crunk: Attorneys at Law

PITFALLS OF DIY DIVORCE— INTRODUCTION

[Divorce](#) is often one of the most difficult experiences in a person's life. Even when you and your spouse have come to an agreement about questions of property and debt distribution or parenting of minor children, divorces can still be very frustrating, risky and complicated if you DIY (do-it-yourself) without a capable divorce attorney. In this day and age of information there are online videos and articles about everything and with some time and research you can learn to DIY many different tasks or projects by tapping into this vast resource of information online. However, divorce law in Georgia is complex with many different options, and you will need to ensure that any agreement that you have come to with your spouse is valid, binding, and complete for now and your future or your children's future if you have them. Hiring a divorce lawyer doesn't mean you are wanting to fight it out with your spouse, as one role of a capable and good divorce lawyer is to be a counselor and advisor to ensure for fairness and completeness of all the issues in your divorce. The process of peacefully deciding all issues of your divorce with fairness and completeness is called Mediation, this topic will be covered in more detail in this guide. In an ideal divorce, each spouse can and should have a professional and capable divorce attorney by your side advising you and ensuring for completeness of your divorce terms with very little "fighting", but instead discussion, negotiating, and reasoning to come to decisions. Your divorce should also cover what would happen in the event that contentious issues arise, even if you get along fine right now. As such, when you are thinking about filing for divorce in Georgia, it is important to have an experienced [Georgia divorce lawyer](#) on your side to make sure you have considered everything you didn't know you could consider and anything else you simply may not think about. An advocate at the law office of Mitchell & Crunk can speak with you today about your case, before you take any steps on the DIY do-it-yourself path of divorce.

Chapter 1: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

REASONS YOU SHOULD NOT DIY YOUR OWN DIVORCE

There are several reasons for hiring an attorney instead of a DIY divorce. The following are the 11 most important reasons to demonstrate why you should not handle your own divorce:

1. Missing Out on Expert Advice:

When you handle your own divorce, you can miss out on extremely helpful and often necessary advice from an expert who knows what is normal and fair and what is not normal and not fair. There are sometimes legal technical issues that only a trained, experienced attorney knows how to handle such as residency requirements in a Georgia divorce case, property distribution, best interest of the child(ren) parenting plans, calculating proper child support, and proper evidence that can be used to support your claims in the divorce process.

2. Increased Stress:

Without help from a Georgia divorce lawyer, you can experience increased stress concerning whether your divorce is going smoothly and whether you have gotten all of the required documents and other materials together in a timely manner. There is also the concern of finding out later you missed some things or could have done some things to save you from future headaches.

3. Potential Mistakes:

Filing and dealing with divorce in Georgia is a complicated process with precise steps at certain points and specific ways those steps are carried out for different situations, and it requires gathering evidence and presenting a case that is admissible before a judge to review. When you deal with your divorce without the help of a divorce attorney, you could make mistakes that will end up costing you both financially and emotionally in the long run or affecting your children more than needed if you have them.

4. May Not Have a Clear and Binding Agreement:

Some spouses are able to come to an agreement with one another about certain divorce terms, but without assistance from a Georgia divorce lawyer, such agreements may not be binding and your spouse may not be held accountable in the future to the agreement. To

ensure that you have a binding agreement, you should always work with an experienced divorce attorney in Georgia.

5. May Experience Delays:

Timeliness is key to many divorce cases, and spouses often want to get through the process as quickly and painless as possible. When you do not have experience dealing with the intricacies of Georgia divorce law, you can experience significant delays in having your marriage dissolved and support agreements put into place, such as trips to the courthouse, re-doing documents, re-signing documents again, and working with the judge's schedule and not your work or family schedule. Depending on the county where you file for divorce, you or your spouse may not even need to step foot inside the courthouse to get divorced with a capable Georgia Divorce Attorney.

6. Could Bring Emotions Into It:

When you handle a divorce on your own without the help of a divorce lawyer in Georgia, you will have to deal with your spouse, and possibly as well as his or her attorney, on your own. Coming face to face with your spouse on a regular basis to discuss the divorce terms can lead to increased emotions and stress that do not need to be brought into your divorce in more abundance. As we all know from life when we make decisions based or affected by our emotions we can make mistakes. With a divorce attorney on your side, you will have an advocate who will not be as affected by the emotions of your situation and be able to voice your concerns and advocate for your rights while handling any contact with your soon-to-be former spouse as necessary.

7. Potential to Be Bullied:

Dealing with your spouse and sometimes his or her attorney can lead to you being bullied. We continue to hear stories of 9 hour sessions suffered through at an opposing spouses attorney's office trying to "break" the spouse to an agreement they obviously did not feel comfortable in some way making either because of ignorance or good reason. A Georgia divorce lawyer can ensure that you are treated fairly throughout the divorce process and never bullied.

8. Could End Up Costing You More:

While it might seem more cost-effective to file your divorce on your own, you could end up paying more in the long run or even short run if your divorce does not end up as you hoped it would or you find out it wasn't as complete with all options and circumstances addressed that needed to be or would have liked to have been. For instance, you could end up in a drawn-out custody battle with your spouse, or you could end up with an unfair property settlement that leads to more courtroom time and, ultimately, the need to hire a lawyer at a later date to attempt to correct or change the terms of divorce. Some terms cannot be changed at all in the future.

9. Missing Out on a Lawyer's Efficiency:

A Georgia divorce lawyer, with experience handling a wide variety and number of divorce cases, can ensure that your case runs smoothly and efficiently. If you file on your own and deal with the divorce on your own, you will miss out on a lawyer's efficiency learned by developed processes and procedures over time and repetition.

10. No Mediator Between You and Your Spouse:

Even in the most agreeable divorces, there are contentious issues that arise between spouses. Rarely do we see that "unicorn" divorce where both spouses have nothing they disagree about, even after a divorce lawyer has counseled them on every aspect to have a complete divorce. So most of the time an experienced and dedicated Georgia divorce lawyer can serve as a mediator between you and your spouse to prevent issues from becoming heated and contentious, in some cases, causing irreparable damage.

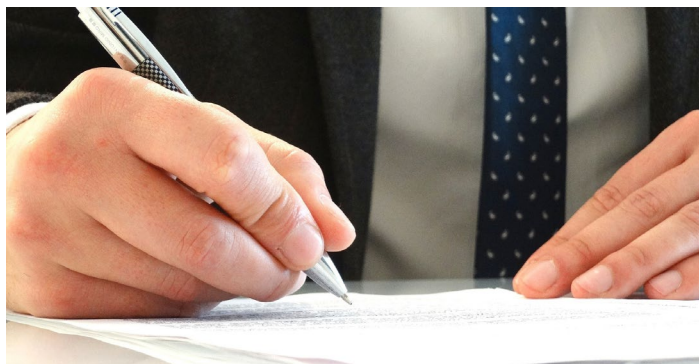
11. No Shoulder to Lean On:

In addition to providing legal counsel and guidance, a good and caring divorce lawyer can also provide confidence from their experience and ability to see the finish line of the divorce more clearly without the emotional baggage and day to day problems that divorce brings temporarily. In addition at Mitchell & Crunk we have established relationships with good stress and mental health counselors and therapists. We also can guide you through some of the next steps after divorce, such as getting other legal documents in place such as a new ID card if you changed your name or need help selling or purchasing a new home, or other additional services to complete the transition for you and your children if you have them to the next and better chapters of your life.

Chapter 2: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

MISSING OUT ON EXPERT ADVICE

When you are considering divorce in Georgia, it is extremely important to work with an experienced Georgia divorce lawyer who can ensure that you are not missing out on expert advice in a wide range of options that you have and that may arise. Indeed, it is one of the most important reasons why you shouldn't file your own divorce.

**Properly Filing Your Petition for Divorce**

Under the Georgia Code, there are specific requirements for filing a petition for divorce, verification, acknowledgement of service, summons, settlement agreement, parenting plan, child support documents, Affidavits, Motions, and the Final Order of Divorce; including specific residency requirements, timing, order, and the all important content of the documents. Generally speaking, to file for divorce in Georgia, you (or your spouse) must have been a resident of the state for at least six months. You must file where the defendant resides or if a spouse has moved out less than 6 months ago you can file where the marital residence is as long as you still live there. You cannot and do not take all the documents at once to the Court and expect to have them take them all off your hands. They will not give you legal advice and will only take the specific documents that are proper to be filed at that time. They will leave it to you to know when it is proper to bring additional documents.

The first document created when you properly file a divorce is called the Petition. It is setting the stage for the Court as to what your divorce is about. Some topics that need to be covered are: Names and addresses of the parties, date of marriage, date of separation, reason for the divorce (irreconcilable differences), whether there are children of the marriage, whether child support or spousal support (alimony) is at issue, whether there are property or assets of the marriage, whether there are debts of the marriage, and how attorneys fees will be paid if an attorney is being used or will be used. Once these are explained each in their own paragraph a brief summary of what you are asking of the Court is written at the end of the Petition for Divorce. The Court would appreciate a "Style" added to the top the says your name, Petitioner v. spouses name, Respondent with the County and State of Georgia at the very top of the Petition. Once complete, you sign as the Petitioner as Pro Se, which means you don't have an attorney and aren't an attorney.

If you did have a divorce attorney, he or she would sign the petition for you.

The next document is the Verification. This simply says what is written in the Petition is true and correct and that you swear under oath that it is so. You need to sign this document in front of a Notary Public.

The next document of the Divorce Petition process is the Summons. This officially notifies the your spouse for the Court's purposes by law that you have filed for divorce and notifies your spouse they have 30 days to object in writing to your petition if they so desire. This document is signed by the Clerk of Court.

So first you file the Petition, Verification and the Summons. There will be a filing fee to do so paid to the Court by cash or sometimes card. Now the very next item the Court will want to know is whether your spouse has signed an Acknowledgement of Service or if you need to have your spouse served by a process server such as the Sheriff's Department of your county, which is the typical default process server of the Court. You will then provide the signed and Notarized by your spouse Acknowledgement of Service or if you don't have that then you can decide to fill out an Entry of Service and pay the Service fee, generally \$50, to have the Sheriff's Department serve your spouse.

Once your Petition, Verification, Summons, and Service are complete with all fees paid to the Court you have an open divorce case that either needs to be closed by settlement outside of Court or scheduling a hearing to address issues you and your spouse do not agree upon outside of Court. There are other variations of how to address your divorce at this point such as Mediation that will be addressed later in this material.

No Court in Georgia will finalize a divorce in less than 30 days. Even then you must have a consent signed by either spouse allowing the Court to finalize the divorce after 30 days. If no consent the Court will wait 45 days or more. If you do not have a lawyer they typically will not finalize it at all until you set a Court date to appear in front of the judge in the Courtroom. This is scheduled on the Judge's schedule and usually is during working hours since that is when Court is open. In most counties if you have an able Divorce attorney they can do all of this for you and you never have to step inside the courthouse.

When you file your initial petition for divorce, you could miss out on expert advice that could allow your petition to move through the system without any unnecessary complications.

Property Distribution

Having expert advice for the distribution of marital property is extremely important in your Georgia divorce case. Missing out on expert advice could mean that you do not receive the fair settlement you deserve, most likely because emotions got involved, you just wanted it over with and not deal with it, or you weren't sure how to figure out what was fair. Why do you need help from a lawyer to handle property distribution? There are many ways in which a divorce attorney can advocate for your rights in terms of the property settlement and can help to make sure that you do not get an unfair deal compared to the several hundred divorces a capable divorce attorney has experience completing.

Georgia law stipulates that only marital property is subject to distribution. While this might sound relatively simple at first, there are many ways in which it can be difficult to determine what is classified as marital property and what is classified as separate property. For instance, if you commingled separate property, such as an inheritance you received or money/property you had before the marriage, with marital property, it can be difficult to trace out the actual amount of separate property. Commingling occurs when separate and marital property gets mixed, such as when one spouse deposits separate money inherited or given by a relative into a shared marital bank account and both spouses use the money for marital items.

In addition to classifying separate and marital property, a divorce lawyer can provide necessary assistance with property valuation. You may have a certain piece of property for which it is difficult to determine a fair market value, or you may have another property that requires upkeep and additional expenses (such as a home) that should be valued differently by the court. Since Georgia follows a theory of equitable distribution, marital property—both assets and debts—will be divided in a manner that is fair or equitable to both spouses. You will want an advocate on your side throughout this process. Otherwise, you could miss out on expert advice concerning property classification, valuation, and distribution.

Child Custody and Support Issues

In addition to filing for divorce and dealing with property distribution, many Georgia couples have children from the marriage and will need to contend with matters of **child custody and child support**. Missing out on expert advice from a lawyer could mean the difference between a favorable child custody arrangement and a child custody order in which you do not receive anything you wanted. The same distractions of emotions, uncertainty, and frustration dealing with all of this on your own can end up with a result you regret later, sometimes greatly regret.

The risks of missing out on expert advice are too great in a Georgia divorce case. The rule is “equitably divided” or “fairly divided considering the circumstances”. This requires experience from seeing divorces play out in all different ways to fully understand first what that rule means in your particular divorce, as over time we see that rarely is any divorce ever the same as any other and second how do you prepare, negotiate, and litigate if necessary to prove what is truly fair to the other spouse or a judge or jury that is making the decision as to what is separate property and what is a fair division of marital property considering all the circumstances.

Proving and building a case for your divorce is a trained skill for a professional that isn't emotionally bound and distracted by the situation. Just like when we are sick or injured and need medical help we need the assurance the sickness or injury is being properly cared for by having a doctor involved. Especially any one of us would not consider removing our own appendix because of the lack of experience, the pain and emotions we would experience, and risk of making a costly mistake, instead we count on the experience, training, and professionalism of a doctor to remove our appendix. For similar reasons you should also consider a consult with an able divorce attorney in Georgia to have assurance your divorce is handled properly at each stage of the process to ensure that you present the best case for a satisfactory outcome.

Chapter 3: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

INCREASED STRESS

Divorce can be an extremely stressful process without a lawyer on your side, whether you have an uncontested or a contested divorce. To be sure, even in situations where spouses generally agree on terms, you are still dealing with the dissolution of the marriage and the loss of a relationship, and if children are involved a whole new family organization. For some people, divorce is the most stressful event they may ever experience, and adding any additional stress can make you emotionally and physically ill and affect the outcome you are planning and hoping to achieve in the end of the divorce. To be sure, “dozens of studies show that stress compromises the immune system,” and as such, “the more stressful the divorce, the more likely it is that illness will follow.”

To be clear, it is best to do everything you can to limit the stress associated with your divorce inasmuch as possible. When you fail to hire a Georgia divorce lawyer and file your own divorce, you can experience increased stress that can have long-term consequences, because it is all on you. You have other obligations to work, children, family, friends, groups, organizations, or a church. Life does not stop in its tracks while you are dealing with the divorce process. You still need to work, eat, sleep, and find time to do what lifts your spirits and reminds you what is most important in your life.

The Harms of Stress

If you decide to file your own divorce, you will not have dedicated counsel on your side to assist with the many tasks involved in a divorce and complications of [Georgia divorce law](#), such as certain filing requirements, property distribution issues and valuations, child support orders, child custody matters, and other important factors in your divorce. When you do not have counsel on your side, it can be extremely anxiety-inducing to attempt to understand how the laws work on your own and to ensure that you are providing the best

possible evidence in your case, all the while keeping everything else you normally have to do or want to do.

On top of the stress associated with attempts to understand Georgia divorce law and to take all the required steps in your case, increased stress can further hinder your ability to focus on the task at hand. According to an [article](#) in Time Magazine, “stress affects emotional intelligence.” Indeed, the article says that stress can impact a person’s ability to do any and all of the following (all of which could be essential in handling a divorce case):

- Hinder your decision-making skills;
- Render you too impulsive when you are making decisions;
- Force you into making mistakes that you would not make otherwise;
- Lead you to ignore certain behavioral or verbal cues from other people;
- Interfere with your relationships with children, colleagues, friends, family members, and others who are part of a necessary support system during a divorce; and
- Lower your productivity level.

In other words, increased stress can prevent you from focusing and can ultimately lower your productivity levels, leading you to make mistakes in the work or efforts you are expected to complete for your divorce case to be successful. Why deal with increased stress during your divorce when you could limit your anxieties by working with a capable, experienced Georgia divorce lawyer?

How a Georgia Divorce Lawyer Can Help

Ultimately, increased stress is only one of the reasons why you shouldn’t file your own divorce. When you work with a capable Georgia divorce lawyer, you can avoid increased stress that can harm your health. As we mentioned above, when you experience stress, it can affect your immune system and can limit your ability to stay healthy. By hiring counsel, you can ensure that you have an advocate to handle all of the legal matters associated with your divorce, which opens up a much more of your time and intellectual space for you to manage your daily tasks involved with work, children, friends, family, groups/organizations, church, and of course your health needs.

At Mitchell & Crunk, this is on our mind for our clients. We have taken the time to form relationships with counselors and therapists to help deal the stress and emotions involved during divorce. We also have taken time to form relationships with massage therapists, spas, gun ranges, travel agents, life coaches, and other forms of good and healthy distractions and “fun therapy” to help manage the stress levels during your divorce.

Chapter 4: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

COULD MAKE MISTAKES

Getting divorced in Georgia without a capable lawyer is complicated and not something they taught you in school, and it requires an understanding of the statutory law and case law concerning issues of properly filing a petition for divorce, equitably (fairly) dividing marital property, accurately determining support, and determining child custody in the best interest of the children. When you do not work with an experienced Georgia divorce lawyer, you could make mistakes. As Abraham Lincoln said, "He who represents himself in Court has a fool for a client." This is even true between lawyers, in fact the quote has been modified to read, "A lawyer who represents himself/herself in Court has a bigger fool for a client." Fool means "a person lacking in judgment or prudence".



With the complex aspects of family law in the state and the emotions involved, many individuals who choose to file their own divorce do not understand the intricacies of the law. It can also be difficult if not impossible to eliminate emotions when you are the person affected by the divorce. Because of these reasons you risk committing errors, as such you risk lacking proper judgment and what would be the prudent course of action and becoming the definition of a fool. While some mistakes can be corrected, although sometimes more costly than just having a capable lawyer handle your divorce, other mistakes can result in an extremely unfavorable property settlement or a child custody situation arrangement that does not meet any of your wishes and can be limited or impossible to correct or change ever or in some situations until certain criteria have been met.

The following are some ways in which you could make mistakes if you file for divorce on your own, and why you shouldn't file your own divorce to avoid making these mistakes.

Filing the Petition for Divorce

Do you know how to file the petition for divorce according to the requirements under Georgia law? There are certain requirements for filing the actual petition and what the petition needs to say in the content of the petition, and you will also need to understand how to assert grounds for divorce. Under Georgia law, grounds for divorce range on grounds of fault or no-fault (no-fault referring to the grounds that "the marriage is irretrievably broken").

Dealing with Property Distribution

Georgia case law clarifies that first separate and marital property are determined, then what ever property is considered marital property—including both debts and assets from the marriage—will be subject to distribution in a divorce. There are numerous ways in which you can make devastating mistakes if you do not work with a capable Georgia divorce lawyer when it comes to proving and deciding what is separate property and what is marital property and marital debts and how the division of marital property should be equitably (fairly) divided based on the fault or circumstances each spouse is in during the marriage, leading up to the divorce and most likely after the divorce.

For instance, marital property is divided according to what is equitable, or what is fair, to both of the spouses. In determining what is equitable, the court looks at many different factors. If you file your own divorce, you may not know to provide certain evidence of the time you invested at home raising children, or other non-monetary value that you gave to the marriage, or what expenses you will have and counted on being paid for by the other spouse. Also so many times individuals end up giving up on the divorce and just giving their spouse what they are asking for in whole or in part and then once the emotions, frustration, and stress is gone they realize it was a mistake and decide then is the time to finally go talk to a lawyer and think they will be able to fix it. Don't give up until you have spoken to a capable Georgia divorce lawyer. As such, you could end up getting less than you actually deserve. This is a mistake that can be extremely difficult to correct.

Seeking Alimony/Spousal Support in Georgia

Seeking alimony or also known as spousal support is also a complicated thing to do, and you can make irreparable mistakes. In order to receive alimony, a spouse needs to show that it is needed and that the other party has the ability to pay in general. More specifically the Court in Georgia will look at the following factors:

- Standard of Living while living together and during the marriage
- Length of time married
- Receiving spouse's age, earning potential, physical/health condition
- Paying spouse's earning capacity, financial situation, debts
- Contributions to the marriage of value but did not produce income

If a spouse seeking a claim for alimony committed adultery or desertion that led to the separation and divorce, in Georgia, the court can refuse to grant alimony to the offending spouse on that basis alone. There are the other reasons you can find Fault in your divorce against the other spouse to be considered for an alimony determination like adultery and desertion, but some are just fault for the divorce and are not determinative for alimony. Here are all 13 reasons to be granted a divorce in Georgia:

- (1) Intermarriage by persons within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity or affinity;
- (2) Mental incapacity at the time of the marriage;
- (3) Impotency at the time of the marriage;
- (4) Force, menace, duress, or fraud in obtaining the marriage;
- (5) Pregnancy of the wife by a man other than the husband, at the time of the marriage, unknown to the husband;
- (6) Adultery in either of the parties after marriage;
- (7) Willful and continued desertion by either of the parties for the term of one year;

- (8) The conviction of either party for an offense involving moral turpitude, under which he is sentenced to imprisonment in a penal institution for a term of two years or longer;
- (9) Habitual intoxication;
- (10) Cruel treatment, which shall consist of the willful infliction of pain, bodily or mental, upon the complaining party, such as reasonably justifies apprehension of danger to life, limb, or health;
- (11) Incurable mental illness. No divorce shall be granted upon this ground unless the mentally ill party has been adjudged mentally ill by a court of competent jurisdiction or has been certified to be mentally ill by two physicians who have personally examined the party; and he has been confined in an institution for the mentally ill or has been under continuous treatment for mental illness for a period of at least two years immediately preceding the commencement of the action; and the superintendent or other chief executive officer of the institution and one competent physician appointed by the court, after a thorough examination, make a certified statement under oath that it is their opinion that the party evidences such a want of reason, memory, and intelligence as to prevent the party from comprehending the nature, duties, and consequences of the marriage relationship and that, in the light of present day medical knowledge, recovery of the party's mental health cannot be expected at any time during his life. Notice of the action must be served upon the guardian of the person of the mentally ill person and upon the superintendent or other chief executive officer of the institution in which the person is confined. In the event that there is no guardian of the person, then notice of the action shall be served upon a guardian ad litem, who shall be appointed by the court in which the divorce action is filed, and upon the superintendent or chief executive officer of the institution in which the person is confined. The guardian and superintendent shall be entitled to appear and be heard upon the issues. The status of the parties as to the support and maintenance of the mentally ill person shall not be altered in any way by the granting of the divorce;
- (12) Habitual drug addiction, which shall consist of addiction to any controlled substance as defined in Article 2 of Chapter 13 of Title 16;
- (13) The marriage is irretrievably broken. Under no circumstances shall the court grant a divorce on this ground until not less than 30 days from the date of service on the respondent.

O.C.G.A. 19-5-3

However, in order to obtain alimony or to prove that it should not be awarded, you need to understand how the court makes these determinations for each "fault" of the divorce category and the type of evidence you need to provide. When you are filing your divorce without the help of a lawyer, there are numerous moments in which you can make mistakes. To avoid errors in alimony determinations, you should always seek advice from an experienced divorce attorney in Georgia.

Child Custody Errors

Making mistakes in your child custody and support side of your divorce case if minor children are involved can often be the most devastating of all. While it is possible to seek a modification of a child custody or support order, making a mistake that results in your limited ability to spend time with your child(ren) can have serious emotional consequences for you and your child(ren). Do not make the mistake of failing to discuss

your case with a divorce lawyer in Georgia.

There is a parenting plan that has many options and that can be customized to fit your specific work situation, living situation, and the needs of the children. There is no one size fits all here at all. If you don't get advice and guidance from a lawyer here you very well will make mistakes of omission by not including all that you could have as a parenting plan for your child(ren) or could end paying or receiving to/from your spouse the incorrect amount of child support as it too has many options to customize and make child support fit your personal situation.

At Mitchell & Crunk the children in a Divorce case for our client become the #1 issue, not just because of our preference or opinion but also because the Court will have your children as the #1 issue to be taken care of first and foremost before everything else in your divorce. As we say at Mitchell & Crunk, there is a "Better way to live, better way to be divorced" and the area of proper child custody through the parenting plan and child support worksheet is where we can really show that we stand behind that statement among other areas of divorce because we take the time to customize it and be as detailed as you would like the plan to be to your circumstances.

Chapter 5: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

MAY NOT HAVE A CLEAR AND BINDING AGREEMENT



If you are planning to file for an uncontested divorce (both parties agree on divorce terms) specifically in Georgia, you may think that you do not need the help of a Georgia divorce lawyer because you and your wife already agree on everything and you have figured out how to do other tasks in the past so you think you should or can figure this new task out also. Since an uncontested divorce means that the spouses have come to an agreement on matters of property division, alimony (or spousal support),

child custody and visitation, and child support, you might assume that there is no reason to have an attorney work with you throughout the process. However, even in uncontested divorces, it is very important to have an experienced divorce lawyer who can guide you through the complicated process of developing a marital settlement agreement that is a fair settlement of assets and debts based on experience, likewise if there are minor children developing a parenting plan and accurate child support to ensure the children maintain a strong relationship with both parents even if you have disagreements in the future, and representing you in a final hearing before the judge (in most counties without you even having to appear in Court), and ensuring that your agreement is accepted by the Court and final.

To be clear, without help from a Georgia divorce lawyer, you may not have a clear and binding agreement that you could regret signing in the future or could be frustrated to find out some terms you felt were strong negotiating points aren't even enforced by the Court. This is an important reason why you shouldn't file your own divorce.

Required Papers and the Marital Settlement Agreement

There are numerous steps involved in an uncontested divorce despite the fact that the spouses may have come to an agreement specifying certain terms. In order to have a binding agreement, however, Georgia family law requires spouses to go through a number of different steps such as filing a correct and complete petition, verification, and summons under the correct jurisdiction and correct venue, serving the other spouse properly, waiting the correct time period, what to say and not to say to your spouse, when

and how either spouse can move out, what happens with the kids or who pays certain bills during the divorce. Also there are the divorce documents that have to be written properly not just for the terms you have agreed upon that can be asked for in a divorce, but will all be enforceable by the Court after submitted, signed and filed in Court. Moreover, the parties will need to file financial affidavits that provide information about their assets, debts, and earnings. The spouses will also need to file documents that allow the court to grant the divorce.

As you can see, even uncontested divorces are complex, and without careful attention to all of the requirements, you may not end up with a clear and binding agreement. In other words, even if you and your spouse agree to specific ways in which the marital property will be divided and child custody will be handled unless you go through the steps that the law requires, you might not have a legally binding agreement.

Unenforceable Terms Commonly Put in Divorce Papers

Here are examples of terms put into a divorce that are not enforceable: a term that a parent will automatically pay more or pay less child support in the future no matter the parent's income, a term that a parent can see the children "whenever they want", any term ordering some other person or business (like a bank) other than the parties to do something in the divorce papers, a requirement that the other spouse cannot have a boyfriend or girlfriend, or a requirement that the other spouse cannot move.

Dangers of Verbal Agreements with Your Spouse

In addition to the importance of making sure the terms of your uncontested divorce are final and binding, a Georgia divorce attorney can also help to ensure that any terms you agree to orally or verbally with your spouse are included in the binding final agreement. In numerous cases, spouses who file for uncontested divorce and decide to do so without the help of an attorney make promises to one another verbally, and they come up with terms for property distribution which they think are fair. In addition, those couples might discuss how they will share time with their children and come to an agreement about custody on the child's birthday and other holidays. They might assume that, since they are not fighting with one another about the terms of the divorce, there is no need to have these particular agreements in writing.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. Without a legally binding agreement that clarifies even the smallest details of property distribution and **child custody**, any verbal agreements you make with your spouse may not be binding according to the law. A divorce attorney in Georgia can ensure that every aspect of your marital settlement agreement is clear and binding.

Chapter 6: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

MAY EXPERIENCE DELAYS



For many Georgia couples who are filing for divorce, it is important to move through the process as quickly as possible to begin assembling a new life after divorce. **Georgia law** provides specific timing requirements for certain elements of a divorce, but others depend upon a number of different factors, from whether the spouses can come to an agreement on terms to how long you have to gather information required for your case. While divorces can drag on for a number of different reasons, you may experience delays that are difficult to handle when you do not have the help of an experienced divorce attorney in Georgia.

In short, you may experience delays that are avoidable if you work with a divorce lawyer throughout your case. The following are some of the reasons that people may experience delays when they do not hire a capable divorce attorney to handle their divorce and instead file and handle it themselves.

Meeting Filing Timelines and Requirements

Under Georgia law, there are specific filing requirements that you will need to meet in order to file your petition for divorce, to ensure that divorce papers are timely and properly served on the other spouse, to submit evidence and other materials to the court, and to provide the court with a marital settlement agreement if you and your spouse can come to an agreement about the terms of the divorce.

Georgia family lawyers have years of experience handling a wide variety of issues in divorce cases, and they have experience with the specific timelines and requirements for a divorce under Georgia law. By working with a lawyer, you can avoid delays resulting from misunderstandings about the law's specific requirements and the deadlines you are required to meet. The most basic timeline being you have to wait 30 days before the Court will consider granting your divorce from the date the other party was notified by either acknowledging service in writing or being served. Even then the Court will only consider your divorce at 30 days if the proper settlement, affidavit, financial affidavit, and consent by both parties is filed with a motion for the Court to grant the divorce.

Most parties that don't hire a lawyer end up waiting around 60 to 90 days or more to be divorced even if they have all the paperwork they need. This is because the Court usually wants the spouses to come to Court on an appointed day and verbally tell the Court that they do want to be divorced and it was them that signed and agreed to the settlement documents. So a common delay even if you are able to figure out all the correct paperwork is that the Court trusts a lawyer from experience knows how to handle it correctly and is an officer of the Court sworn to be truthful. Whereas, any other person without a lawyer is not an officer of the Court and doesn't have the experience working with the Court like a capable divorce attorney in Georgia.

When the Other Spouse Does Not Want to Get Divorced

When you want to file for divorce and move forward as quickly as possible but your spouse does not want to get divorced, your spouse can take steps to delay the process. If you file your divorce on your own, you may not understand some of the ways to deal with a contentious divorce and an angry spouse who does not want to move forward with the proceedings based on the terms you consider to be fair and could even be fair. By working with a divorce lawyer who has experience handling cases like yours, you can move through the process as quickly as possible and take steps to ensure that the other spouse cannot use unfair delay tactics.

Other Spouse Will Not Agree to Terms

Failing to agree to terms is one of the major reasons that divorces get delayed. When you do not have an advocate on your side, it can be extremely difficult and time-consuming to negotiate with the other party. For example, you may have serious concerns about matters of property distribution or child custody, but you cannot convince your spouse to even consider your concerns within these matters. Indeed, negotiations and discussions can come to a standstill, and it can be complicated to move forward in your divorce process. Eventually even leading the Court to call a hearing themselves and then dismiss your case entirely. A Georgia divorce lawyer with experience handling intricate negotiations can prevent unnecessary delays and can work to get you a timely resolution.

Chapter 7: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

COULD BRING EMOTIONS INTO IT

Divorce is never a happy event for anyone, even when it is inevitable, according to an article in Psychology Today. For every person who gets divorced, there are many emotions that arise, from anger and frustration to feelings of sadness and loss. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are more than 800,000 divorces every year in the country, and according to the U.S. Census, divorce rates are higher in some of the Southern states than in other parts of the country. For all of those more than 800,000 people, divorce results in emotional shifts. While you may not have control over all of the emotional responses from your divorce, you can limit some of those emotions by working with an experienced Georgia divorce lawyer.

Focusing on the “Big Picture” of Your Divorce

As this [article](#) in the Huffington Post emphasizes, it can be extremely difficult to avoid having an emotional response to your divorce, and no one expects you to keep emotions out of the process entirely. However, you could bring additional emotions into the process if you decide to handle the divorce on your own, especially when you get caught up in the small, frustrating details or if a new reality starts settling in and your spouse has moved on and barely treats you as a friend now.

For example, you could end up spending an entire day focusing on a comment your spouse made about your parenting skills, or a statement from your spouse about wanting to keep a certain marital asset when it comes time for property distribution. In other words, you could expend significant emotional energy on small details or personal issues between the two of you that may not have any kind of impact on the bigger picture or just be a distraction from the most important terms to iron out in your divorce.

A divorce lawyer in Georgia can help you to focus on the bigger picture. Rather than



using substantial amounts of your emotional energy to deal with day-to-day issues in the divorce, or to focus on off-hand comments, your divorce lawyer can manage those matters for you and can help you to keep your emotions in check. The important thing to remember is that you want to have a divorce in which you are treated fairly when it comes to matters of equitable (fair for circumstances) distribution of property and maintenance to ensure your bills are paid through alimony (spousal support) and if there are children; child support, and child custody and visitation. There are big decisions that can affect you the rest of your life and you want an experienced and capable divorce lawyer with a clear head helping you make these big decisions. Moments will come when your emotions can have a negative effect on your divorce if you are doing it yourself and it doesn't matter if it is uncontested and agreed upon by both spouses or is a contentious trial for your divorce. Keeping these big-picture issues in focus with the help of a lawyer can help you to keep emotions to a minimum.

Interactions with the Other Spouse and the Day-to-Day Stressors of Divorce

When you file a divorce yourself, you will need to deal directly with the other spouse or your spouse's lawyer. Handling day-to-day contact on your own, not to mention dealing constantly with the facts and requirements of your divorce, can put a serious strain on your psychological and emotional health. To be sure, handling a divorce on your own means that you could bring emotions into the process that could be avoided by hiring a [Georgia divorce attorney](#). Your divorce lawyer can manage the daily issues that arise from your divorce and will be the contact person for the other spouse.

Having an advocate on your side means you can limit the emotions of the divorce proceeding and can focus on your own physical and mental health throughout this difficult process. Ultimately, this is one of the most important reasons why you shouldn't file for divorce.

Chapter 8: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

POTENTIAL TO BE BULLIED



It is common that a divorce can bring out your partner's animosity or they hire a lawyer that has an ego or just operates in an aggressive or pushy way, which can lead to harassment and bullying. When you are going through a divorce, however, you shouldn't have to handle the bullying on your own. A divorce is stressful enough without the other party wearing you down. One of the top reasons why you shouldn't file your own divorce is to ensure you have a legal support system on your side.

Bullying During Divorce

Bullies use the legal process to abuse their spouse. Bullies may seem confident, but it usually stems from insecurities and other deeply embedded emotions. Spouses often become bullies so they can regain control after the other spouse has filed for divorce. Bullies may engage in behavior such as withholding money, making false allegations, refusing to abide by court orders or delaying the divorce process. Dealing with a bully can be frustrating, but it's possible to get through it. In most cases, it is temporary. But to remain only a temporary issue, it becomes crucial to have legal counsel such as a capable Georgia divorce lawyer to set a plan for the future and send a message that any bullying tactics will not continue.

You can diffuse the situation of a bullying spouse by blocking out the negative comments. Distract yourself and tell yourself that you won't let the comments hurt you. If you have a divorce lawyer by your side you don't have to talk to the other party at all and can leave that communication to your capable, experienced divorce attorney. Understand your spouse's motives. If your spouse is saying mean things, it's because he or she wants something from you. They want you to settle on something, and they're trying to scare you into doing so. Be the bigger person and agree to settle on something that may not matter to you, but matters a lot to your spouse. Look for small things that won't affect you in the long run.

Why You Need a Lawyer

As humans, we need outlets to vent our frustrations. If we keep everything bottled up inside, it only makes matters worse. One tiny thing can suddenly cause us to explode. You don't want that to happen during a divorce. It's essential that you **create a support system** with personal and professional resources. Friends and family are personal resources who can help you vent your frustrations, while a lawyer can listen to any ideas or suggestions you may have. A lawyer is a professional resource who will be there throughout the divorce to listen to you.

Your lawyer is on your side who is there to fight your battle with you. Your lawyer can help you manage your bullying spouse or their attorney by serving as your voice. Lawyers know how to deal with difficult people, so when you're tired of dealing with your bully husband or wife or their attorney, let your lawyer take over.

The Importance of a Lawyer if You Are Being Bullied

When you file a divorce yourself, you will need to deal directly with the other spouse, who may choose to bully you throughout the process. Without a lawyer, this will only add stress to the process. You can prevent this by hiring a Georgia divorce attorney. Your divorce lawyer will serve as your advocate. He or she can shield you from the bully's attacks so you can focus on taking care of yourself and your children, if applicable.

Some of the most frustrating and saddest instances for our office at Mitchell & Crunk is when someone comes into the office and they are either considering signing divorce documents that are not helpful or fair to them but they are considering signing them anyways because they are tired of the spouse harassing and basically bullying them. Sometimes they don't even see the bullying. Or worse when someone comes to us that had been divorced months or years ago and they aren't happy with their divorce terms and want them changed and we see how unfairly and even bullied they had been in the divorce and didn't do anything about it but just put up with it until they are tired of it and give up. Some stories of even sitting in their spouses law office for 6-8 hours being pushed to agree to their spouse's terms of divorce that they didn't like.

Please, please do not put up with this kind of treatment during your divorce.

Chapter 9: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

COULD END UP COSTING YOU MORE

There are many aspects of our economy that are forcing people to file their own divorce as an effort to save money. Or it may be a confidence of having accomplished other tasks on your own that you had not done before. In fact, there are even many websites encouraging people to consider a do-it-yourself divorce and have some documents you can use. Even though they try to sell you on the economic benefits and ease of DIY divorce, divorce is rarely a simple process because it is about your whole life and every

aspect of it or at least can affect every aspect of your life. Also only some terms of your divorce can be changed or modified in the future, so if something is done wrong you may not be able to change it very easily if at all. Filing your own divorce can complicate things. It comes with many disadvantageous risks that could cost you in the long run. While you might not be prepared to spend thousands of dollars on a lawyer, having an experienced legal professional that has dealt with the same situation or something similar on your side is money well-spent.

We hear of too many stories from people needing or desiring to get some changes done from their original divorce or being sued for changes to be made to their original divorce by their spouse and hear the stories of how some simple errors and other times complicated errors cause so much grief. In each of these instances it would have been worth the time and money to get it done right the first time.

Costs of Divorce

The first cost is a priceless cost because aspects of divorce cannot be changed in some cases or only except for limited or specific circumstances, such as property or debt distribution, alimony (spousal support), child support, and child custody. Can you live with the "cost" of not seeing your children as often as you could have if you would have hired a capable divorce attorney? Are you happy paying your now ex-spouse support for much longer than needed when you have both long moved on? In any case the cost of changing or modifying an aspect that can be modified will cost twice as much as the original DIY divorce gone wrong cost, sometimes even triple or quadruple the cost depending on what needs to be changed and how big of a case it is to change and correct with the Court.

Too many times we have people come to our office that paid a few hundred dollars for

documents or found them for free somewhere on the internet and then paid the Court filing fee of a few hundred dollars only to find out some aspects are not enforceable or not acceptable. This can happen with people that have come to us as simple as a typographical error that cost around \$4,000 to a situation where the spouse knew something that was an issue, but thought it would be handled outside the divorce and didn't get it taken care of during the divorce and created an expensive issue to attempt to get fixed or modified into the divorce.

Issues With a DIY Divorce

One of the most crucial reasons not to represent yourself in a divorce is if your spouse has hired an attorney, especially a capable and experienced one. Their duty and job is not to make sure they have a fair deal for their client and you. Their first priority is to work towards a deal their client has hired them to work on. If you represent yourself in a divorce and the other party has a capable and experienced lawyer, that lawyer will take advantage of the fact that you don't have the help of a legal professional. Their lawyer will know from experience what a good deal is, an average deal, and an unfair deal based on experience. Their lawyer will also know all the intricacies of the law that could leave you with a less-than-fair settlement. As a result, you might not get your side of the story heard at all or not sufficiently, and the other party will prevail.

Another issue with a DIY divorce is that you may not understand the law. You can do all the research you possibly can, but many different situations arise where a family law attorney truly understands your legal rights and options. Not only do they have the necessary education to help you in a divorce hearing, they also have practical experience negotiating and agreeing upon settlements that are equitable (fair) for both parties under the law. A lawyer can uncover all possible assets in a divorce and help you get a fair settlement.

A lawyer knows how to argue your case and negotiate outside of the courtroom. They know all the paperwork that needs to be filed and how to meet the deadlines. They also know all the ins and outs of the court system. Lawyers have been through the process many times. In addition, representing yourself could bring about legal issues. If you purchase divorce preparation services from a person not licensed to practice law, you could get in trouble, as this is against the law.

Ultimately, representing yourself in a divorce is not a good strategy and neither is purchasing a "divorce kit", just like taking out your own appendix instead of consulting with a doctor or having a doctor take it out. There are too many risks that it may not end well. To be sure, self-representation is a huge undertaking, and it is something you should avoid at all costs if you want to achieve a favorable outcome in your divorce and can easily become much more costly.

An Attorney is a Valuable Asset in the Divorce Process in Georgia

You may think that a DIY divorce will save you money because you won't have to pay lawyer fees. However, going this route will likely cost you more in the long run. A lawyer can help you in many ways. Make sure to protect yourself in the divorce process by reaching out to a talented Georgia divorce attorney for representation. You'll be more likely to get the settlement you deserve.

Chapter 10: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

MISSING OUT ON A LAWYER'S EFFICIENCY

When you represent yourself in a divorce, you miss out on a lawyer's efficiency. You waste valuable time, money and other resources researching then trying to do, then researching and then trying to do what you researched again. Your divorce can often result in delays, all of which only adds stress to an already stressful situation.

A divorce involves so many elements. It involves much more than you and your spouse ending your marriage. You may have children to consider. You may own a home and many other assets. There may be a significant amount of money involved. You may own a business or be thinking about retirement. There may be concerns if one of you has a chronic health condition or disability.

In short, a divorce can significantly impact you financially in many different ways, in addition to stress, emotions, and the risks involved. The potential mistakes you make by representing yourself could come back to haunt you. A lawyer's efficiency can help you avoid mistakes while reducing stress and making the process easier for all involved. A lawyer's efficiency will stream line the process to a plan that not only gets you to where you want to be as quickly as it can, but will also accomplish what you knew you wanted and others you didn't know you could or should accomplish. With a lawyer on your side, your divorce is more likely to result in a favorable outcome. This is one of the many reasons you shouldn't file your own divorce.

Why Lawyers Are Efficient

Family law attorneys have been through the divorce process many times with their clients. They understand the paperwork that is involved, and they know all of the deadlines you will need to reach. For anyone without legal experience, filing any of the necessary documents can be very complex, somewhat convoluted, and really tedious to fill out. You might not understand how to complete it or even know that you have a deadline.

Also a Family law attorney has been to law school and trained in the skill of lawyering, which is being analytical of all aspects of a problem, being able to look at a set of circumstances and do at least better than a person who hasn't gone to law school at seeing and figuring out all the potential problems and all the possible solutions. All the



while a properly trained lawyer must be professional by not allowing emotions to make decisions.

If you try to do your own divorce, everything becomes more complicated. If you don't hire a lawyer, you will still need to hire experts. You may need an accountant, real estate broker, **financial expert**, mediator, banker, and others. It can be stressful trying to gather these experts on your own. A lawyer, on the other hand, can help you find the assistance you need and even take care of all these processes.

Lawyers avoid all the delays that come with self-representation. They are constantly on the ball trying to keep things moving so you can get your divorce finalized as quickly and easily as possible. They will work with the other party to negotiate and reach a settlement.

Lawyers are able to stay efficient because they are not personally/emotionally invested in your divorce. They won't get distracted by the behavior of the other party. They stay objective and are able to offer you options that can help speed up the process. They can also advise you as to whether or not you should take a settlement offer based on experience and based on what a judge or jury would decide in Court.

The Importance of a Family Law Attorney

Family law attorneys are skilled when it comes to divorce. They know the process like the back of their hands and they have figured out the most efficient ways to help you reach the most favorable outcome possible. You'll be doing yourself a huge disservice by going the divorce route alone. Indeed, the efficiency of an experienced lawyer will save you time, money, and protect your emotional and stress reserves allowing you to focus on your employment and important relationships in your life.

Chapter 11: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

NO MEDIATOR BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE



While a mediator and lawyer are often two different things, a family law attorney can act as a figurative mediator in a divorce. If you are representing yourself and things get heated between you and your spouse, you will have to handle the situation on your own. It will be hard to negotiate with the other party if you don't have the right position to leverage or skills or legal knowledge to do so.

A lawyer has the skills and knowledge to help you, however, and can help move

things along. He or she knows that successful negotiations require effective strategies. Yelling and arguing do nothing to change a person's mind or help reach a resolution.

How a Lawyer Can Help With Mediation

Armed with the facts of the case and a thorough knowledge of the law, family law attorneys have an advantage when it comes to **mediating**. They know how to use all the ammunition they can to persuade the other side with their argument.

Lawyers also understand that patience is key. Sometimes it takes time to get a person to change his or her mind about a situation, but they don't give up. They are persistent, so they keep following up. Do you have that same persistence? If your spouse kept wearing you down with insults and false allegations, wouldn't you come to a breaking point quickly? To this point, your spouse also probably knows you pretty well and knows your breaking points and what you will and won't respond to. Lawyers are able to navigate through the emotions and feelings of a divorce being unphased by the emotional investments of either party or the emotional break points.

Lawyers know that information is power. They work to get as much information from the other party as possible. They know that your spouse has motivations for acting the way he or she does, so they work to uncover your spouse's goals and needs. They do this by creating rapport. This can be difficult for spouses to do when they are in the throes of a divorce.

A lawyer will do what it takes to get you and your spouse to come to an agreement,

if that is what you want your capable divorce attorney to do instead of going to court. But if no agreement can be reached are you willing to go to court on your own, with no representation? If so, unfortunately for many people they soon realize that no one is there to hold your hand, the judge or staff can't in fact by law. They can't give you legal advice and will tell you that all the time as an answer to almost any question you have except "where is the restroom?". Additionally if you now go to a lawyer you may be paying more for a lawyer or certain lawyers may not even take your case because it is already started and they have to be jumping into someone else's plan instead of being able to create their own from the beginning. It is not impossible as our law firm of Mitchell & Crunk has done so many many times, but it can at times not be the most comfortable depending on how much has happened beforehand. Also, hiring a lawyer after mediation has failed and before you go to Court has possibly greatly damaged your new lawyers ability to reach an out of Court settlement instead of hiring them from the beginning. A capable divorce lawyer knows how to maximize their clients' leverage. They seek to understand what you and your spouse expect in a settlement and will go all the way to court to make sure you get what you desire. Finally, if you're too focused on settling because you know very well you don't know how the Court system works and what would happen there, you have given a lot of leverage to your spouse to get a less than fair settlement out of you because you will reach the point of desperation to settle and the other party will end up with an advantage if they want to use it.

Why You Shouldn't File Your Own Divorce

By representing yourself in a divorce, you're bound to come into conflict with your spouse at one point or another. By having a third party on your side, such as a lawyer, you'll have someone to negotiate and communicate with the other party on your behalf. A divorce is a life-changing event, so don't go through one alone. It's important to protect your legal rights in a divorce, and you can do so by hiring a Georgia divorce attorney for help, before Mediation.

Chapter 12: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

NO SHOULDER TO LEAN ON



In the midst of a divorce, you will likely have friends and family members who you can talk to. You will be able to vent your frustrations to them. They may have gone through a divorce and may be able to offer emotional support and advice about dealing with your soon-to-be ex-spouse. They may even offer legal advice, though you should generally be wary of this. If your friends are not lawyers or not a capable divorce attorney in Georgia, they probably don't truly understand the law or the dynamics of a divorce case in Georgia. Every divorce is different, and what they did in their case may not apply to you or you will have a few different pieces to be addressed most likely.

While you will need people who can provide you with emotional support during this time, you need a shoulder to lean on when things aren't going your way in the divorce process. You need someone who understands what you are going through, knows the plan to reach the finish line, and who will fight for your rights. This is certainly one of the many reasons that you shouldn't file your own divorce. Instead, it is in your best interests to reach out to a dedicated legal professional for help.

How a Lawyer Can Provide a Shoulder to Lean On

Family law attorneys have been through the divorce process many times with clients just like you. When you hire a divorce lawyer, they work for you—not the other way around. They are getting paid to help you transition through the divorce process with your best interests in mind. They are part of your professional support system and will provide a shoulder for you to lean on during this difficult time.

Lawyers understand that spouses may behave badly during a divorce. While there's not much your friend or sister can do about that, your lawyer can help you take appropriate action. If your spouse is threatening you, for example, there are legal provisions in place which you can rely on.

Emotions run high in a divorce, so you may be tempted to make decisions based on how you are feeling. A lawyer, however, understands that **decisions must be based on logic**. Even though you are understandably upset and hurt, your lawyer will be there to remind you that a divorce is a business transaction and you shouldn't let your emotions get in the way.

Lawyers understand that you will face new challenges as a single person. Many have personally faced divorce themselves or have staff you will work with that have gone through divorce. While you may be relieved to be out of a bad marriage, you are starting a new life. You may struggle to make ends meet. Your children may have trouble adjusting to two households. A lawyer can help you find career services, counseling, financial advice and other resources you need to get back on your feet and become successful on your own.

It is important for a good divorce lawyer to have established relationships with counselors, therapists to provide services as necessary to deal with the new reality of being single again or taking care of the children by yourself.

There are additional steps after a divorce that occur after the divorce is finalized. These steps are still very much a part of the divorce even though the legal part of it is over in the Court system. A good divorce attorney will assist and ensure that these steps after the divorce are also accomplished and completed. Some of them are to change your ID if you changed your name after the divorce. Sometimes a good referral for a realtor to sell some real estate, such as the home or a referral to purchase or rent a new home with new furnishings. For a good divorce attorney the divorce process is not complete until life has settled into the new chapter of life. At Mitchell & Crunk this is how we view divorce.

Chapter 13: Pitfalls of DIY Divorce

**ANSWER: CONTACT A
DIVORCE LAWYER**

Now that we have concluded the 11-part series “Pitfalls of DIY Divorce,” you have 11 good reasons why you should not consider a DIY divorce. While many divorcing couples are drawn to the idea of a do-it-yourself divorce because of the savings in money or a chance to “not fight”, it’s not a good idea in the long run. If your divorce really is simple after a review by a capable divorce attorney, then it shouldn’t cost an arm and a leg. Also, hiring a capable divorce attorney doesn’t mean you are going to battle to “fight”. As explained earlier, a capable divorce attorney can act as a mediator to resolve some conflicts and be a means of communication outside of you and your spouse communicating directly about everything. Don’t be lured by the simplicity DIY Divorce, doing it yourself works in many other areas of life, but so rarely in divorce. No divorce is simple—even amicable ones.

In a divorce, you have to think about your future financially and if you have children involved what is best for them. A poorly handled DIY divorce can stick with you for a long time. You don’t want that to happen. You want to avoid mistakes because once the final divorce decree has been issued, there’s no turning back.

Hiring a lawyer may sound like a scarier and more complicated process than it really is, but as this guide explained, handling a DIY divorce on your own is even scarier and more complicated. A good and capable divorce lawyer should make you feel comfortable and feel like a professional confidant and friend on your side that has the experience and skill to create a good plan and then carry it out to the end for you. They will serve as your advocate throughout the process, helping you navigate the ups and downs you will face along the way.

Nobody wants to endure the emotional pain of divorce, but if you must, make sure it is done right. A legal professional knows the law. Why waste valuable time and money trying, hoping, and worrying about your case, when a lawyer offers so many benefits? The services of a capable divorce lawyer should be seen as an investment in your future and peace of mind for your present.

How you handle your divorce will impact your life for many years. At Mitchell & Crunk we are dedicated to family law issues of Divorce, Child Custody, Father’s Rights/Legitimation, Adoptions and Estate Planning (which also needs to be updated/completed during divorce). We care deeply about the family dynamic and ensuring familial relationships endure through legal issues of divorce, child custody, or adoptions. We help families write new chapters. There is a better way to live, there is a better way to be divorced. Let us help you.

Call us Today for a Free 20 minute consult to introduce our law firm to you, find out some information about your situation, and then go over the options you have and pricing for those options. We look forward to being your law firm.



Mitchell & Crunk

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

[Visit Our Website](#)

Helping Families Write New Chapters